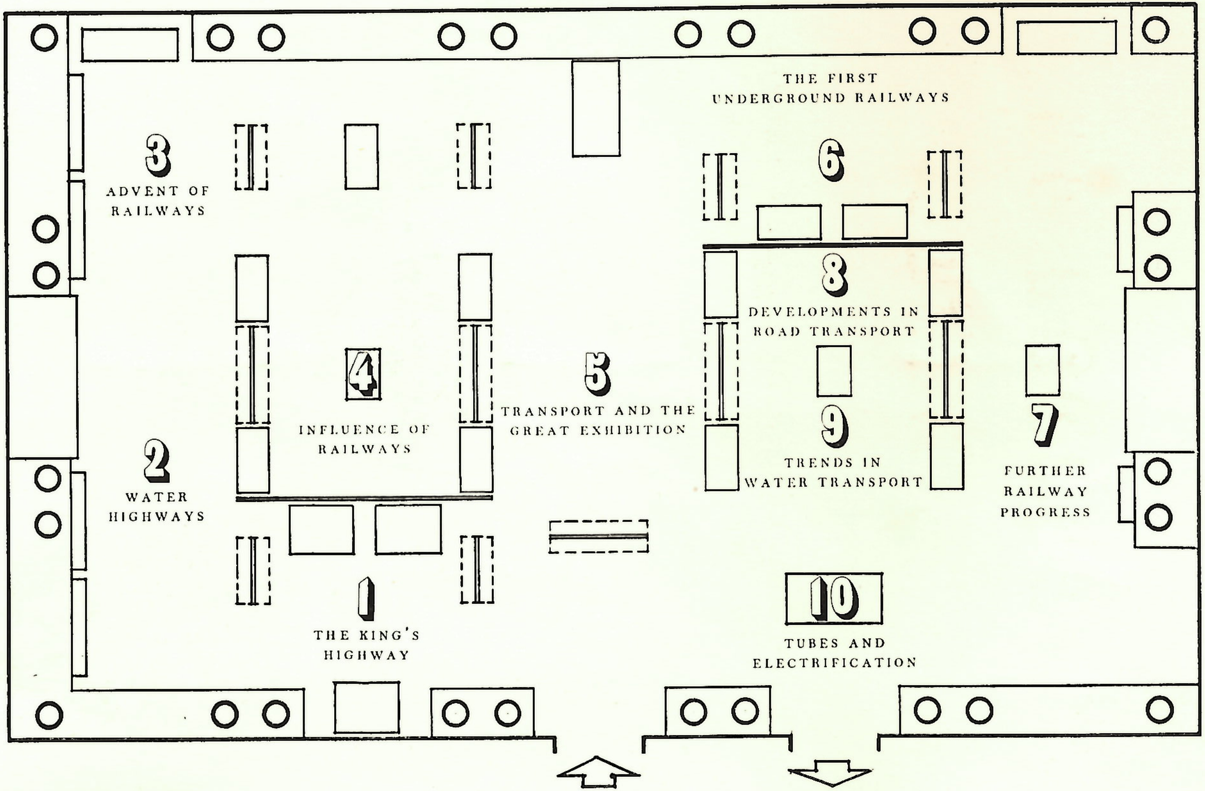
LONDON ON WHEELS

AN EXHIBITION OF LONDON TRAVEL IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

LONDON
BRITISH TRANSPORT
COMMISSION
1953

PRICE ONE SHILLING

LONDON ON WHEELS


THE FIRST UNDERGROUND RAILWAYS
3
ADVENT OF RAILWAYS
6
8
DEVELOPMENTS IN ROAD TRANSPORT
4
5
TRANSPORT AND THE GREAT EXHIBITION
INFLUENCE OF RAILWAYS
9
TRENDS IN WATER TRANSPORT
7
FURTHER RAILWAY PROGRESS
2
WATER HIGHWAYS
1
THE KING'S HIGHWAY
10
TUBES AND ELECTRIFICATION

LONDON ON WHEELS

AN EXHIBITION OF LONDON TRAVEL
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY
IN THE SHAREHOLDERS' MEETING ROOM, EUSTON STATION

LONDON
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FOREWORD

When the Historical Relics Section of the British Transport Commission was established in the spring of 1951, the Commission accepted a number of recommendations contained in the Report of their Committee on Relics and Records published in January of that year. Among these recommendations was a proposal that the London & North Western Railway Shareholders' Meeting Room at Euston should be brought into use as an exhibition hall for the display of historical material. The Commission feel that there could be no better way of making this Room accessible to the public, and that its use for the purpose of historical exhibitions will be widely approved.

The Commission's collections contain items of many kinds and sizes, with eighteenth-century pumping engines and early steam locomotives at one extreme and, at the other, early timetables and Company seals. In putting on view this first selection of smaller objects, the Commission have also kept in mind the keen interest aroused by the locomotives, vehicles and other large exhibits which are now kept in many different places throughout the country. They intend that the popular Railway Museum at York should continue to concentrate on the history of railways in the North of England. It is their hope to establish, at some future time, comprehensive museums in London and Edinburgh for the display of objects associated with British Transport's waterways, railways and road services. Because of its association with that wider programme, the present exhibition has been arranged in standard museum fittings designed for permanent use. Though the Euston Meeting Room is not to be regarded as a British Transport Museum, its opening as an exhibition hall should prove of great help in the development of the larger scheme which the Commission will carry to completion as circumstances permit.

The Meeting Room, a work of considerable historical and architectural interest, is part of a group of buildings at Euston which it is the Commission's intention to preserve as an historical monument in accordance with the recommendations of their Committee. The new decorations which have just been completed represent an attempt to restore the Room to its original condition. The finishes for the walls follow the specification of P. C. Hardwick, the architect, which is fortunately preserved in the Commission's collection. So far as is known, there is no surviving drawing showing the actual colours used, but the library of the Royal Institute of British Architects has a coloured perspective of the Coffee Room in the Great Western Royal Hotel, Paddington, by the same architect, in which the finishes are very similar; use has been made of this drawing in the interpretation of the written specification. London is rich in architectural treasures, but there are not many fine interiors of this period that can be seen by the public in the central area of our capital, and the Euston Meeting Room should make a welcome addition to their number.

Hurcomb

Chairman

LONDON ON WHEELS

London, a century and a half ago, was a truly national capital, more metropolitan than cosmopolitan. Its inhabitants numbered little more than 860,000. Its main streets, cobbled and dirty, had very poor oil lamps; the rest had none. In Pall Mall, gas made its first appearance in 1808. There was no London County Council and no Metropolitan Police. As the tides ebbed and flowed, river craft shot the dangerous rapids of Old London Bridge.

Little transport was needed; the Londoner lived where he worked. Going westward, the open country began with Hyde Park. Eastwards there were cornfields at Hackney. The Edgware Road was a country lane. South of the Thames the old Borough of Southwark was surrounded by fenny meadows and pollard willows. Decrepit windmills creaked round by Vauxhall. From the Borough to Greenwich were more marshes, more willows, more windmills.

1

THE KING'S HIGHWAY

On the streets of that bygone London, the sedan chair lingered, but the hackney coach provided the only widespread public transport. Proprietors were licensed, and were responsible for the good behaviour of their drivers. Long-distance traffic in and out of the city was carried by mail coach, stage coach and stage wagon, in descending order of quality. The mail coach, which appeared late in the eighteenth century, was the fastest and most expensive, running by night and day. It was strictly limited for passengers, who paid fourpence to

Hungerford Suspension Bridge, built in 1845

fivepence a mile for outside seats, and eightpence to tenpence inside, compared with twopence-halfpenny to threepence outside, and fourpence to fivepence inside on the ordinary stage coach. The mails were the cream of transport. They paid no tolls, and the turnpike gates had to be opened ready for them. 'Driving the Mail' was a privilege sought by gentlemen amateurs, and the mail guards—at first equipped with blunderbusses, but later, as highwaymen were put down, with long copper coach-horns—were men of great pride and prestige in their calling.

The ordinary stage coaches were somewhat variable. George Borrow angrily recorded the insolence of the coachmen, and taunted them with their imminent ruin by the new railways. Humblest in public transport was the stage wagon, a huge lumbering vehicle on broad wheels, drawn at a walking pace by six or eight cart-horses, with the passengers squeezed in amongst the merchandise. The fast four-horse coaches could average ten to twelve miles an hour on John Loudon MacAdam's new metalled roads, some of which had been planned and laid down by Thomas Telford. Inns, some very ancient, formed the usual terminals.

In the city, cabriolets or 'cabs' came to compete with, and largely to oust, the old hackneys. Some odd designs were built, but in 1834 Joseph Hansom invented a two-wheeled cab, which was improved by Joseph Chapman in 1836, while Daniel Davies originated the 'four-wheeler'. In 1829, George Shillibeer brought out his three-horse omnibus, and the horse-bus was to flourish for over seventy years. Steam buses and coaches appeared also, begun by Goldsworthy Gurney at the end of the eighteen-twenties. They were fiercely attacked, and at last driven off the roads by punitive tolls. Walter Hancock succeeded in running a steam bus service between the Bank, Islington and Paddington in the early thirties, and ran occasional excursions to Brighton. His last and best steam carriage, *Automaton*, made 700 journeys, at speeds comparable to those of much later motor-buses.

2

WATER HIGHWAYS

Samuel Pepys often described his use of the river for moving through London in the mid-seventeenth century. It was cleaner, more agreeable, and safer than the streets, apart from the hazards of Old London Bridge. The watermen bitterly resented improvements in street transport, when cabs and omnibuses eventually appeared. Small sailing ships plied along the coasts from London River until steamers superseded them in the early nineteenth century.

Late in the eighteenth century the country's canal network was begun, at first in the North and Midlands but extending during the first decade of the nineteenth century to London, through the Grand Junction Canal. In London itself, the Regent's Canal linked it with the Docks, whence also came the Grand Surrey and the Croydon Canals. Water transport could handle enormous loads, and the canals, unlike coastwise shipping, were safe from attack by French privateers during the Napoleonic wars. Passenger packets appeared on the canals, and, with horses changed at stages of from four to six miles, could show a travelling speed of eight to ten miles

Watermen's Steam Packet Company's badge, *c.* 1845

By courtesy of the Libraries Committee, Corporation of London

an hour. In 1806, troops were taken by water from London to Liverpool in seven days.

In 1814, soon after the first services on the Clyde, a passenger steamboat, the *Marjary*, made regular trips on the Thames. The General Steam Navigation Company was formed in 1824, and not only ran services to Thanet, driving out of business the old 'Margate Hoys', but plied to Rotterdam and Hamburg as well. Like other innovations, these early steamship services had their objectors. Dickens's Mrs Gamp apostrophized the Antwerp packet as the 'Ankworks Package' and condemned its supposed interference with her professional calculations.

3

ADVENT OF RAILWAYS

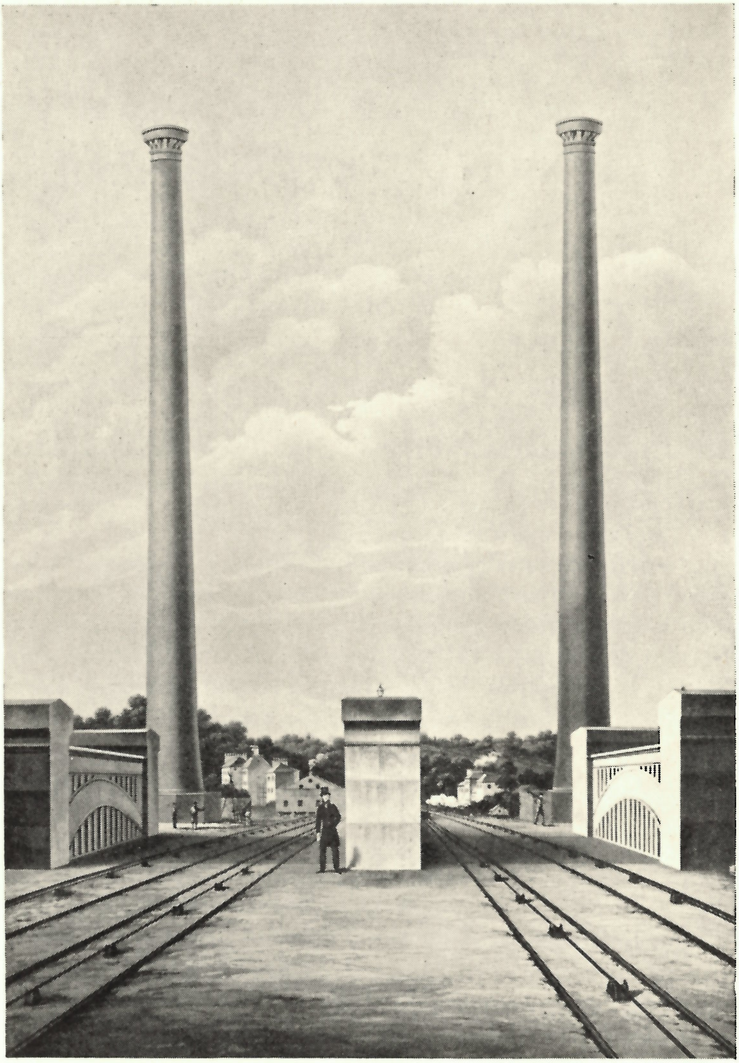
The railway, in primitive forms, was ancient, but in 1801 railway transport was planned, and three years later opened, in the environs of London. It was provided by the Surrey Iron Railway, between Croydon and a wharf at Wandsworth, via

Kennington Turnpike Gate in 1838

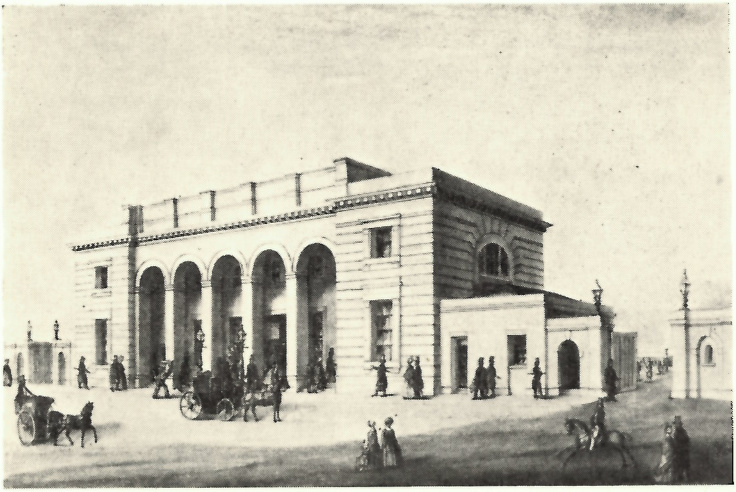
By courtesy of John Reid, Esq

the Wandle Valley and its numerous mills. The Croydon, Merstham & Godstone Railway soon after provided an extension southwards to quarries in the North Downs. The Surrey Iron Railway had double track, and of course, horse traction. Only goods traffic was conveyed.

In 1809, Richard Trevithick, the pioneer of high-pressure engines and steam locomotion, exhibited a locomotive and a carriage on a circular track, near the present site of Euston Road. People regarded it as a sort of merry-go-round, and never took it seriously, although it worked. From 1825 onwards the Stockton & Darlington Railway worked goods by steam, but passengers, at first, by horse carriages between the steam trains. The Canterbury & Whitstable Railway, opened in 1830, was mostly cable-worked, and the Liverpool & Manchester Railway with locomotives, conveying all traffic by steam power. London's first railways followed in 1836, with the opening of the first section of the London & Greenwich Railway by the Lord Mayor. It was carried over the Bermondsey marshes by a continuous viaduct of 878 arches. By virtue of this line, London Bridge is the senior London terminus.

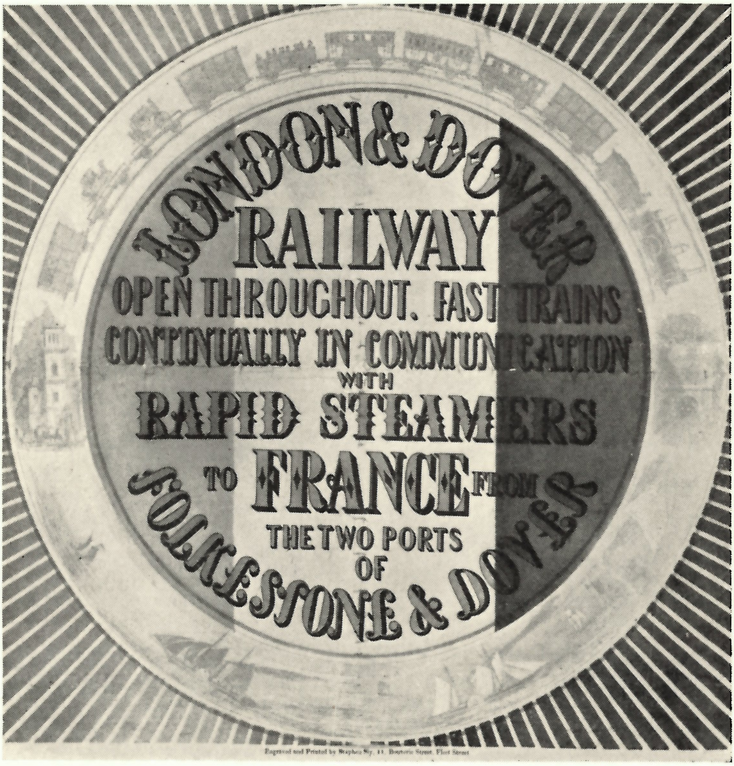


Camden Town fixed-engine house, *c.* 1837, showing cables used for working trains into and out of Euston



Nine Elms Passenger Terminus, opened in 1838

London's first trunk railway, the London & Birmingham, was opened as far as Boxmoor in 1837, though not completed until September of the following year. It was a Stephenson line, and its building was attended by many severe problems. Until 1844 the incline into London from Chalk Farm was cable-worked. The architect of Euston, Philip Hardwick, built the huge Doric portico which still stands as a symbolic gateway to the North. His son, P. C. Hardwick, added the superb Great Hall in 1846. Also in 1838, the year of the London & Birmingham's completion, the first sections of London's other original main lines were opened—the Great Western from Paddington to Salt Hill near Maidenhead, and the London & Southampton (afterwards South Western) from Nine Elms to Woking. Waterloo was not opened until 1848. In 1839, the London & Croydon Railway was opened, partly on the remains of the old Croydon Canal. It was the first of the group of lines serving the South East and the South Coast. North of the Thames came the little London & Blackwall and the more ambitious Eastern Counties Railways. The Croydon and the Blackwall both made expensive and unlucky attempts to do without locomotives, the former



A London & Dover Railway poster of 1844

trying 'atmospheric' traction and the latter for some years using cables. Railway extension down London River damaged the older steamboat traffic.

4

INFLUENCE OF RAILWAYS

In ten years, London transport had changed. In 1836, London's first railway was the new spectacle, and regarded as little more. By 1846 the metropolis radiated main-line railways. The last London to York mail coach was withdrawn in

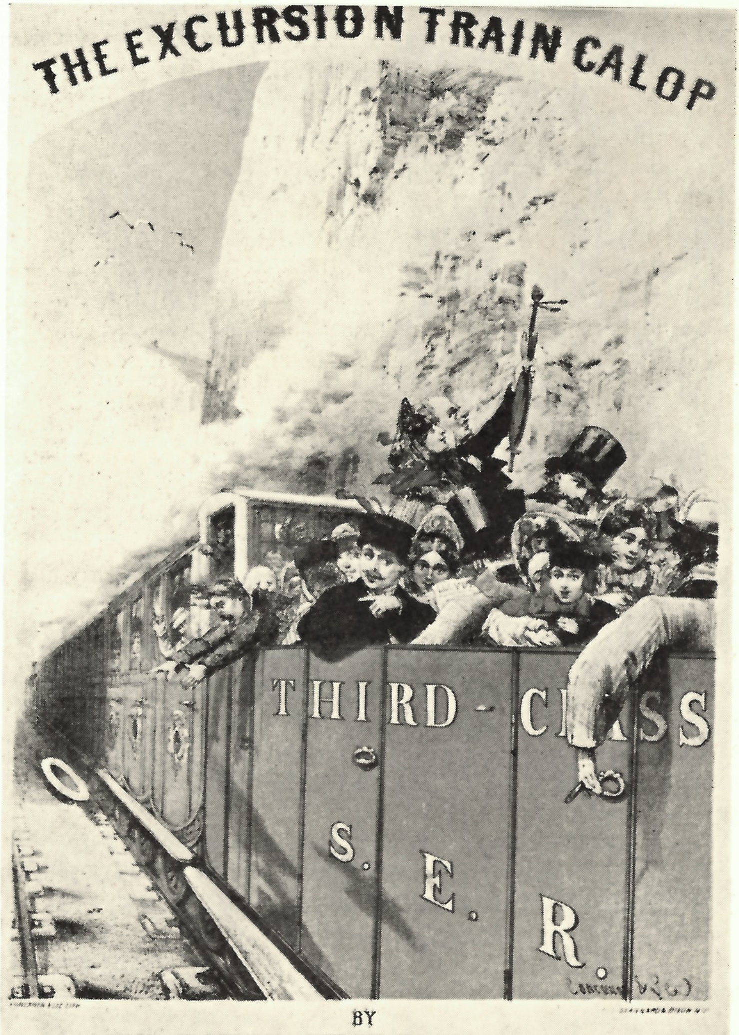
1842; the coaching industry was being cut off in its very prime. In 1846, too, the great railway mania reached its height; many of our most important lines, after the original main lines already mentioned, were incorporated in that year, and many, too, suffered from the fact that their development was due more to breakneck speculation than to planning on a national basis. The rail suddenly became a commonplace. One sees it happen in Dickens's novels. In *Pickwick* there are no railways. In *Dombey and Son* they arrive, and have an important part in the climax.

Many hated them, and sought to show that they shortened life with their noise and rush, and the supposed noxious gases in the new and terrible tunnels. But other disinterested people championed them. The great Dr Arnold of Rugby said that they had destroyed feudalism. A medical practitioner said that railway travel equalized the circulation, promoted digestion, tranquillized the nerves, and often caused sound sleep on the succeeding night. Class distinctions remained rigid in travel as in life. First, second, third and occasionally fourth-class carriages were provided. By an Act of 1844 reasonable treatment of third-class travellers was made obligatory. The very superior often preferred to travel in their private carriages, chained to flat wagons. Railway stations became self-conscious in grandiose styles. Carriages improved more slowly. The dawn of modern signalling came at the junction of the Croydon and Greenwich Railways at Corbetts Lane. At first, trains were hand-signalled by policemen. Edmondson's printed tickets succeeded the old written waybills, inherited from coaching practice.

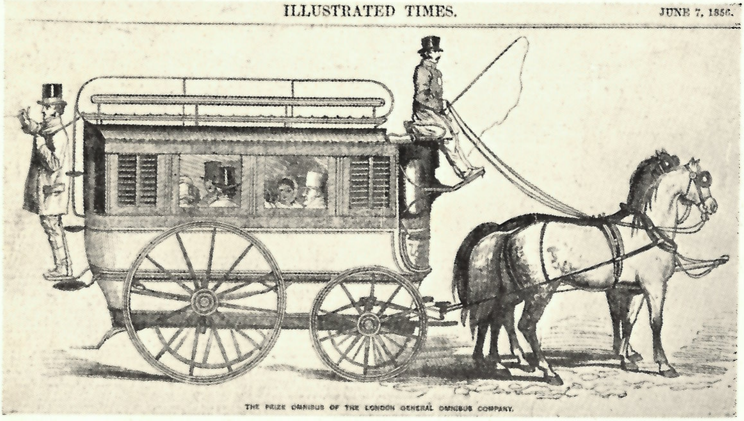
5

TRANSPORT AND THE GREAT EXHIBITION

The Great Exhibition of 1851 did more even than Prince Albert, its great promoter, had hoped. Not only did it place scientific and mechanical advances on show to the world; it demonstrated the power of the new transport system to carry an enormous overload of passenger traffic. Some 25,000


THE EXCURSION TRAIN GALOP
THIRD-CLASS
S.E.R.
BY
FRANK MUSGRAVE.
LONDON BOOSEY & SONS 24 & 28 HOLLES STREET

An excursion train on the South Coast, as portrayed on the cover of a piece of popular music, 1844


ILLUSTRATED TIMES.
JUNE 7, 1856.
THE PRIZE OMNIBUS OF THE LONDON GENERAL OMNIBUS COMPANY.

The London General Omnibus Company's prize omnibus, 1856

people came to attend the exclusive and expensive opening alone, and hundreds of thousands came in by rail from all quarters, and from foreign countries also. There were now hundreds of omnibuses on the streets, and to increase their capacity seats were placed on the roof, beginning a practice characteristic of London ever since. The fifties saw the rise of Thomas Tilling, who started with one bus in Peckham, and founded one of the greatest bus undertakings in the world. French speculation, most curiously, began the London General Omnibus Company in 1855, formed to buy up existing fleets. It was re-formed as a British company in 1858, and by 1860 there were 1,200 buses on the London streets. In 1851 came another main-line railway, the Great Northern; this company opened King's Cross in the following year. Suburban passenger traffic developed, and the great late-Victorian spread of London began. The running of workmen's trains started in east and south-east London, and was made compulsory in the sixties as a means of clearing the crammed central slums by housing labour outside. The sixties saw the southern lines cross the river to Victoria, Charing Cross and Cannon Street. The opening of the Midland Railway's London extension brought with it, in 1868, Gilbert Scott's huge Gothic St Pancras, in all the magnificence demanded by contemporary taste.

6

THE FIRST UNDERGROUND RAILWAYS

The growth of London, and the coming of the great railway passenger and goods stations on the perimeter, made the city's traffic, always congested, reach terrific proportions. The noise was tremendous and the blockages incessant. To ease passenger traffic, underground railways were proposed, and the first, the Metropolitan, was built on the cut-and-cover principle by Sir John Fowler, to link Paddington, residential Marylebone and the northern terminal stations with the City. Work began in 1860. In 1862 the Fleet Ditch sewer, which had to be diverted, burst and flooded the workings. In 1863 the railway was opened from Paddington to Farringdon Street, with mixed-gauge tracks, and for a short while it was worked by the Great Western Railway with its broad-gauge trains. The GWR had begun with a seven-foot gauge, and the last of it was not converted until 1892. So, with the Metropolitan company in the northern, and, a little later, the Metropolitan District Railway in the more southern parts of London, the underground railway system grew into an ordered whole. It was worked by steam for many years, and in some places the atmosphere was indescribable, but Londoners found it very useful. Unlike other trains, the Underground trains were lit by gas from the first.

By an Act of 1824, the Thames road tunnel from Wapping to Rotherhithe had been built, under terrible difficulties, by Sir Marc Brunel, father of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the builder of the Great Western. In 1869, the East London Railway was opened, through this old tunnel.

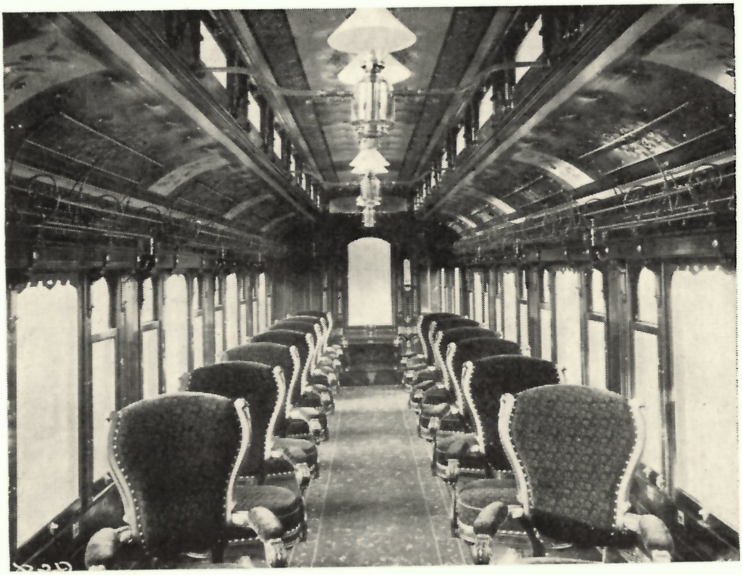
When Peter Barlow was sinking caissons for the old Lambeth Bridge, it occurred to him that such iron cylinders might be equally well forced horizontally through the London clay. The idea was the beginning of the tubes, and it took shape in the Tower Subway, opened under the river in 1870. It was worked at first with a cable tramcar, but later became a footway, and was closed with the opening of the Tower Bridge in 1894.

Steam-hauled Metropolitan District train at West Brompton, 1876

7

FURTHER RAILWAY PROGRESS

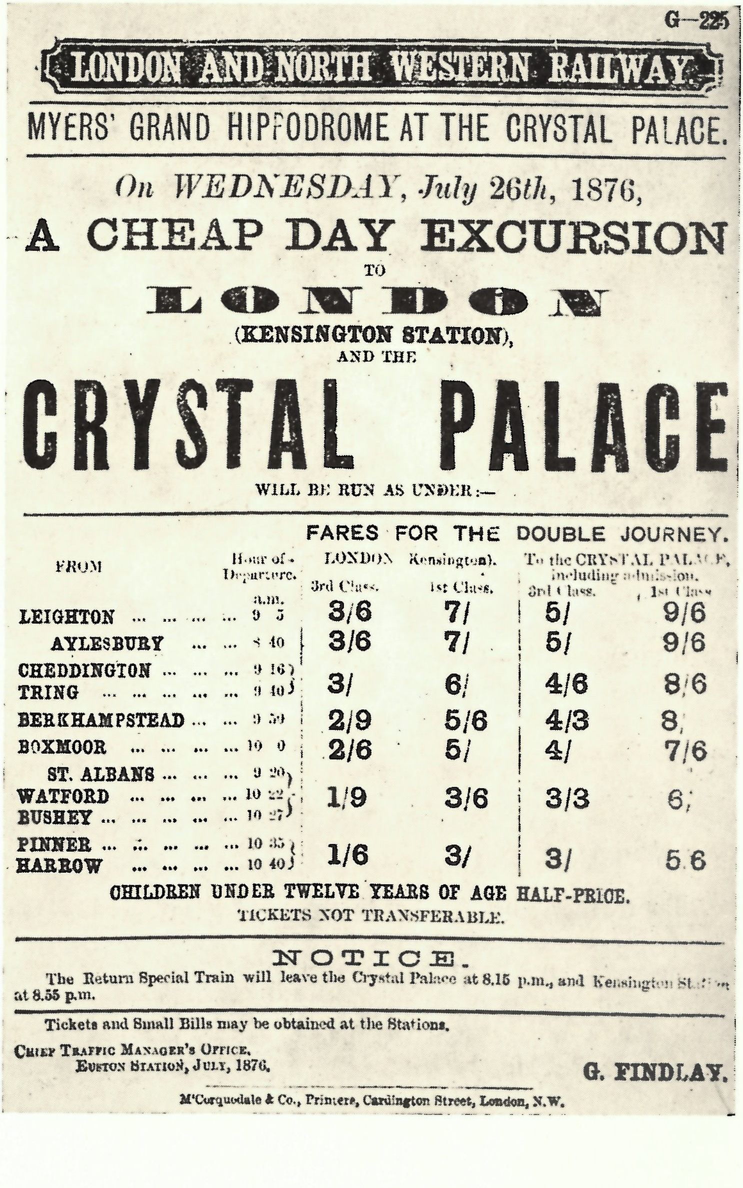
The eighteen-seventies saw the first really great improvements in the carriage of railway passengers. Up to now they had been conveyed in small carriages, usually four-wheeled, and had been dependent for food and comfort on refreshment stops at the principal stations. In the sixties, lavatories appeared in saloon carriages for hire. In 1871, refreshment baskets arrived. In 1873 came the first sleeping cars. In the previous year the Midland had undertaken to carry third-class passengers by all trains; in 1874 it imported Pullman cars from America, and in the following year built large coaches anticipating those of today. Second-class was abolished on the Midland, and all third-class carriages were given soft seats. A Pullman dining-car appeared on the Great Northern in 1879. In 1881 a Pullman car on the



Midland Railway Pullman car, 1876

Brighton line was electrically lit. A third-class diner appeared on the Great Eastern in 1891, though not on a London service. The Great Northern, Midland and London & North-Western companies introduced diners on London services in 1893. In 1892 the Great Western Railway ran their first corridor train with lavatory accommodation for all three classes.

The railways were fiercely competitive, and caused much inconvenience when they refused to co-operate, though there were alliances as well as enmities. Suburban traffic grew and flourished. The Great Eastern moved in to Liverpool Street from Bishopsgate; the London, Chatham & Dover, a creation of the late fifties, built a terminus at Holborn Viaduct, both in 1874. The Metropolitan extended into Buckinghamshire. Many of the wealthier professional and mercantile men lived far out at Brighton, Tunbridge Wells or Hastings, and travelled luxuriously up and down. In 1892 the British railway system was physically unified by the final abolition of broad gauge on the Great Western in the West Country. For



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LONDON AND NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

MYERS' GRAND HIPPODROME AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

On WEDNESDAY, July 26th, 1876,

A CHEAP DAY EXCURSION

TO

LONDON

(KENSINGTON STATION),

AND THE

CRYSTAL PALACE

WILL BE RUN AS UNDER:—

FARES FOR THE DOUBLE JOURNEY.

FROM	Hour of Departure.	LONDON (Kensington).		To the CRYSTAL PALACE, including admission.	
	a.m.	3rd Class.	1st Class.	3rd Class.	1st Class.
LEIGHTON	9 5	3/6	7/	5/	9/6
AYLESBURY	8 40	3/6	7/	5/	9/6
CHEDDINGTON	9 16	3/	6/	4/6	8/6
TRING	9 40				
BERKHAMPSTEAD	9 50	2/9	5/6	4/3	8/
BOXMOOR	10 0	2/6	5/	4/	7/6
ST. ALBANS	9 20	1/9	3/6	3/3	6/
WATFORD	10 22				
BUSHEY	10 27				
PINNER	10 35	1/6	3/	3/	5/6
HARROW	10 40				

CHILDREN UNDER TWELVE YEARS OF AGE HALF-PRICE.

TICKETS NOT TRANSFERABLE.

NOTICE.

The Return Special Train will leave the Crystal Palace at 8.15 p.m., and Kensington Station at 8.55 p.m.

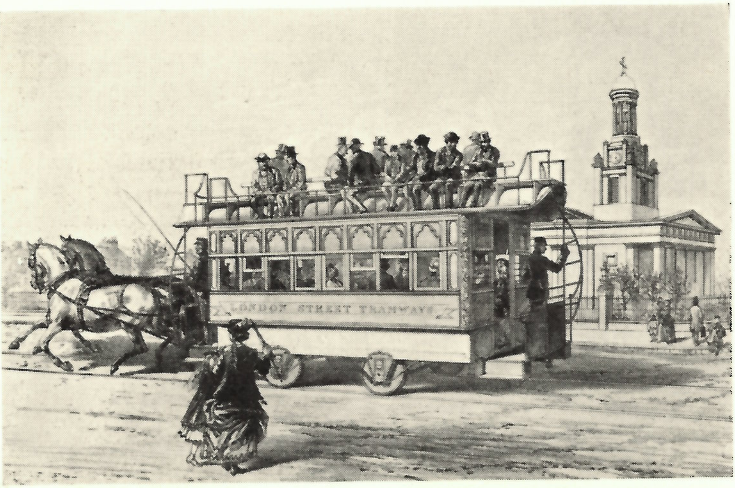
Tickets and Small Bills may be obtained at the Stations.

Chief Traffic Manager's Office,
Euston Station, July, 1876.

G. FINDLAY.

M'Corquodale & Co., Printers, Cardington Street, London, N.W.

London & North Western Railway excursion handbill, 1876



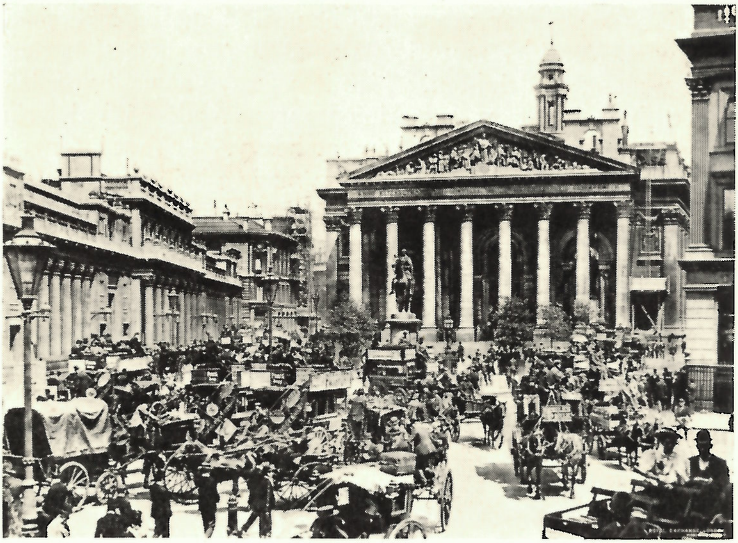
London Street Tramways horse tram of the late 19th century
By courtesy of the Libraries Committee, Corporation of London

years, gauges had been mixed into Paddington. In 1899, the last of London's main lines was opened, that of the Great Central into Marylebone. Travel had become much more comfortable, as other companies were obliged to follow the liberal example of the Midland Railway.

8

DEVELOPMENTS IN ROAD TRANSPORT

While there was an abortive attempt by Mr G. F. Train to introduce horse trams at the beginning of the 'sixties, tramway construction in earnest followed the passing of the Tramways Act 1870, which required grooved rails flush with the road surface—Train's rails had projected. The Metropolitan Street Tramways Company ran London's first regular trams between Brixton Station and Kennington Gate, using double-deck horse cars. It was immediately followed by the North Metropolitan company between Whitechapel and Bow. By 1880 nearly 500 trams and about 4,000 horses were carrying more than sixty-four million passengers a year on



Street scene near the Royal Exchange, *c.* 1900

By courtesy of the Libraries Committee, Corporation of London

ten routes. Tramways did not enter Central London. On the very steep gradient of Highgate Hill a cable tramway was opened in 1884, and cable trams appeared later in Brixton, though London never went in for them on a large scale, like Edinburgh. The London County Council, formed in 1888, took over the horse tramways of London Tramways Limited ten years later.

The London bus industry expanded, and the 'garden-seat' type of double-decker appeared in 1883, superseding the back-to-back 'knifeboard' bus. Roll tickets were issued by the London & District Omnibus Company, formed in 1880. The bell-punch appeared in 1893. The trials of horses on the steep slopes of the Fleet Valley had led to the building of Holborn Viaduct, over which the first bus passed in 1869. Its central arch is a well-known landmark, but much of the viaduct is invisible. Everywhere one saw the hansom cab, the 'gondola of London', but the years of the horse cab were numbered even as it reached the height of its fame.

In 1896 an Act of Parliament abolished the repressive restrictions which for years had hampered mechanical road transport. Wealthy motorists staged an 'emancipation run' from London to Brighton, which is repeated annually to this day with ancient cars. Experiments were made with electric buses, but the batteries were far too heavy. The first internal-combustion-engined bus in London made a brief but historic appearance under the Motor Traction Company in 1899. In 1895, the taximeter was invented in Germany, and four years later London's first taxi-cabs, six of them, started plying from the old Hotel Cecil.

9

TRENDS IN WATER TRANSPORT

Passenger services continued on the Thames, but for years local traffic had been able to compete but little with that on the roads and railways. A ten-minute steamer service between Chelsea and London Bridge, calling at all piers and operating at exceedingly low fares, tried to compete with the buses. But in the late eighties competition between the London General Omnibus and the London Road Car Companies resulted in even lower fares than those on the steamers. One could go from Charing Cross to Liverpool Street by bus for a penny. The buses competed with everything else. The Metropolitan Railway ran opposition buses, distinguished by large red umbrellas.

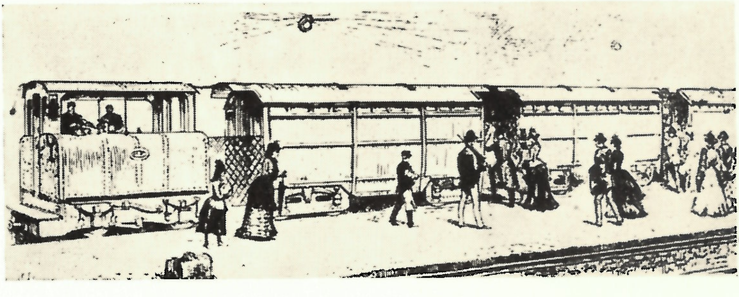
Much better results were achieved by companies operating excursion steamers. Then, as now, the General Steam Navigation Company operated its 'Eagles' down the river; there were the 'Belle' steamers. The famous *Koh-i-Noor* and the *Royal Sovereign* appeared in 1892 and 1893, and in 1894 came the magnificent *La Marguerite*, plying from Tilbury, which could take 3,000 passengers to Margate and 2,000 across the Channel, making day trips to Boulogne.

Although the railways had dealt the canals, in the thirties and forties, a blow which was mortal to some, the seventies saw a revival of goods transport by canal. The passenger packets did not reappear, however.

10

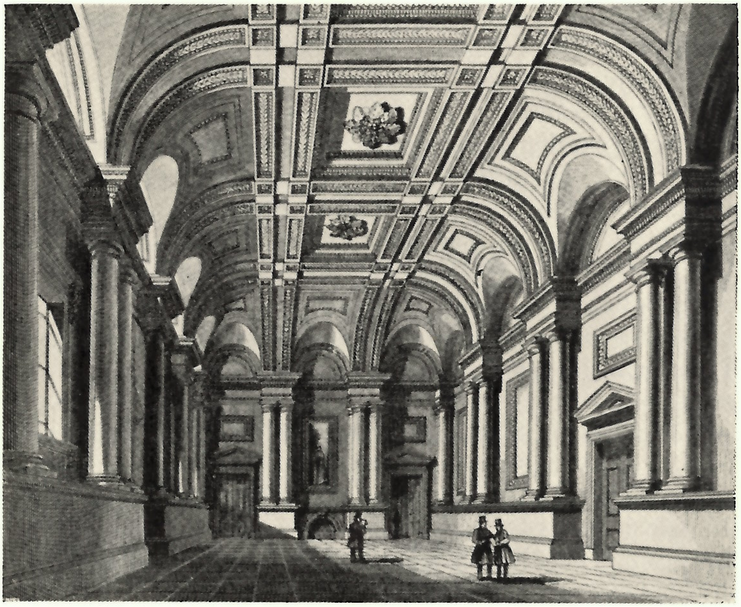
TUBES AND ELECTRIFICATION

As we have seen, the first London tube was the short-lived Tower Subway, with its even shorter-lived cable tram. The first electric tube railway came in 1890, when the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward VII, opened the City & South London Railway between King William Street and Stockwell. It had a uniform fare of twopence, and was worked by small electric locomotives hauling grim, windowless cars in trains of three. It was a deep-level line throughout, with access by lifts. In 1898 there followed the Waterloo & City Railway, giving a tube extension of the service provided in and out of Waterloo by the London & South Western Railway. In 1900 came the Central London Railway, also with a uniform fare of twopence. Although the City & South London had anticipated it, 'Tuppenny Tube' was the nickname given by Londoners to the Central London. Its trains were much superior to those of previous deep-level lines, including one in Glasgow, and set a standard which was followed and improved thereafter. In 1898 the Metropolitan and the District



City & South London Railway tube train, 1890 companies experimented with electric traction between Earl's Court and Kensington High Street. The old steam underground lines were falling on evil days as well as evil repute, and as a result it was decided to electrify all the underground and inner suburban lines of these companies. It was not to be completed until the new century was five years old, but the provision of London with the world's greatest system of underground electric railways had begun with the close of the Victorian era.

C. HAMILTON ELLIS



The Shareholders' Meeting Room as completed in 1849

THE SHAREHOLDERS' MEETING ROOM EUSTON STATION

The Shareholders' Meeting Room at Euston, in which the exhibition LONDON ON WHEELS is presented, forms part of the large rectangular building of which the main portion is occupied by the famous Great Hall. The building was completed in 1849 to the designs of P. C. Hardwick (1822–92), son of Philip Hardwick, the architect of the Euston portico or 'Arch'.

The building commemorates the founding, in the year 1846, of the London & North Western Railway by the amalgamation of the London & Birmingham Railway with the Grand Junction and Manchester & Birmingham Railways. The London & North Western was a far greater railway than the London & Birmingham had been and it was necessary that this superior greatness should be suitably expressed. But at the entrance to the Euston terminal station the London & Birmingham had already erected its Greek 'Arch', the most impressive station front yet built by any railway, and this magnificent structure was then only seven years old. The problem was to devise a piece of architecture that would be something other than a station front and that would yet dominate the 'Arch', putting the 'Arch' as it were in its place as a work associated with an earlier and lesser railway. The architect's solution was the new building of which the Great Hall forms the main core and the Meeting Room the focal point.

When Euston Station was first built by the London & Birmingham Railway, the shareholders of the Company usually met in the public rooms of the Euston Hotel (one of the pair of hotels built in 1839 and since merged into one), a practice followed by many other railway companies. The shareholders of the London & North Western Railway Company used the new Meeting Room for the first time on August 17, 1849. George Carr Glyn (who later became Lord Wolverton) was in the chair and some 300 shareholders were present. Many other famous men of the transport world have spoken in this historic room since then; they include the Marquis of Chandos, Admiral Moorsom, Sir Richard Moon, Lord Stalbridge, Lord Lawrence of Kingsgate, Sir Guy Granet and Lord Stamp. The Room has also been used for balls, banquets and theatrical performances.

Despite its great size, the Room has not always been able to accommodate the meetings for which it was designed. There have been times when a crowd of shareholders stood on the landing, watching the proceedings through the open doors. On at least two occasions, meetings have had to be held in the Great Hall. In 1886 upwards of two thousand shareholders met to protest against proposed legislation which threatened a revision of the Schedule of Rates, Tolls & Charges contained in the Acts by which the line had been authorized. The Chairman, Richard (afterwards Sir Richard) Moon, was unable to make his voice heard in the vast area of the Great Hall, and the reading of the speech was delegated to Thomas (afterwards Sir Thomas) Brooke of Huddersfield, who spoke from one of the semi-circular half-landings of the great staircase. In 1924 the Great Hall was again used, this time for the first Annual Meeting of the London, Midland & Scottish Railway Company held under the chairmanship of Lord Lawrence of Kingsgate.

The Shareholders' Meeting Room (originally known as the General Meeting Room) is approached along the long axis of the Great Hall, by way of a broad staircase of Craigleith stone and a landing to which a screen of Ionic columns gives the appearance of a monumental portico. The sense of architectural climax is heightened by the elaboration of the central doorway with its sculptured group of Britannia accompanied by a lion, a ship, the Arts and Sciences, and Mercury. The Room is planned in five bays along its length and three across the width; the bays are divided by Roman Doric columns rising from pedestals. The ceiling is coved and pierced by lunettes. The Meeting Room is the only one of its kind; no other railway in the country had a room specially built for meetings of its shareholders.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The exhibition LONDON ON WHEELS presents for the first time a typical selection from the historical relics and records of all parts of the British Transport Commission's undertaking. But the exhibition also tells a story, and grateful acknowledgment is due to a number of owners who, by lending objects in their possession, have helped to make the story more instructive and more complete.

The Commission wish to thank especially those who have authorized loans from the British Automatic Co Ltd; the Bruce Castle Museum, Tottenham; the General Steam Navigation Co Ltd; Lancaster Central Public Library and Museum; the Libraries Committee, Corporation of London; the Members' Library, London County Council; the National Maritime Museum; the Port of London Authority; the Royal Institute of British Architects; the Science Museum, London; W. H. Smith & Son Ltd; Southampton Art Gallery; and the Armouries, The Tower of London.

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